

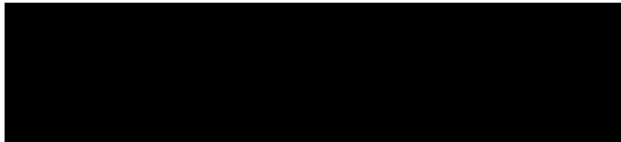
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29 March 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Analysis Branch, DD/CR
FROM : Chief, Publications Staff, ORR
SUBJECT : Release of CIA/RR OM 62-3, Albania, March 1962,
Confidential, to Foreign Governments

1. It is requested that the attached copies of subject report be forwarded as follows:

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2. All ORR responsibilities as defined in the DDI memorandum of 13 August 1952, "Procedures for Dissemination of Finished Intelligence to Foreign Governments," as applicable to this report, have been fulfilled.



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3 Attachments

DOCUMENT NO. 2
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NEXT REVIEW DATE: 29/6/79
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE: 29/6/79 REVIEWER: 035377

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Copy No. 191

GEOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

CIA/RR GM 62-3
March 1962

ALBANIA



DOCUMENT NO. 1
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CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

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ALBANIA

Albania has been a hermit nation, living in the midst of rugged mountains and pestilential swamps, retaining its tribal and feudal social structure until well into the twentieth century, and surrounded by enemy peoples covetous of its territory. Attaining independence later than its neighbors, and even then lacking an effective national consciousness, Albania has been able to exist as a state mainly because of support from some outside power and, to some extent, because of mutual suspicions on the part of the adjacent countries. Albanian governments have sought foreign support to modernize the economy of the country and to insure protection against neighbors, but they have not hesitated to change mentors from time to time.

The internal weakness of Albania and the prospect, or actuality, of its domination by a foreign power have in turn been sources of anxiety to neighboring countries. Italy used Albania as a bridgehead for attempted expansion into the Balkans at the expense of Yugoslavia and Greece. During the interlude of Yugoslav dominance, Albania was one of the staging areas for Communist guerrilla operations against Greece. From the end of World War II until the Hoxha-Khrushchev break, the Vlorë-Pasha Liman area was a base for potential Soviet control of the Adriatic and for the presence of Soviet naval strength in the Mediterranean. The value of the base to the USSR was limited, however, by the isolation of Albania from the main body of the Soviet Bloc. In the present transitional period -- during which China is replacing the USSR as the principal economic and political mentor of Albania and the Hoxha regime is simultaneously seeking trade relations with the Free World -- Italy, Yugoslavia, and Greece regard with apprehension both the possibility of Chinese hegemony in Albania and the alternate possibility that Albania may remain a power vacuum.

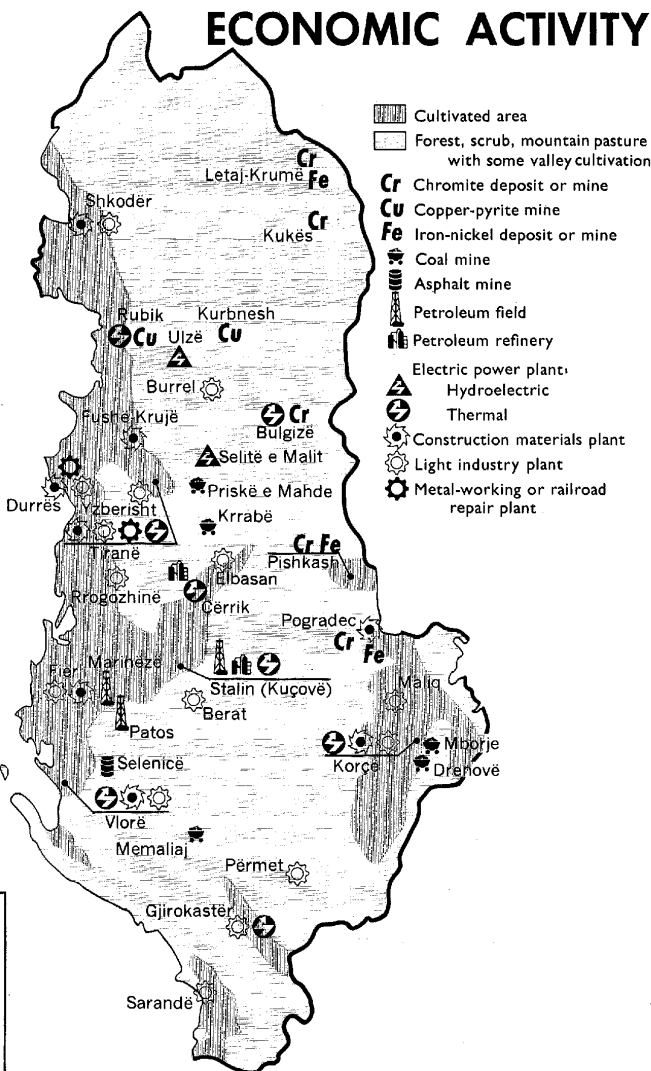
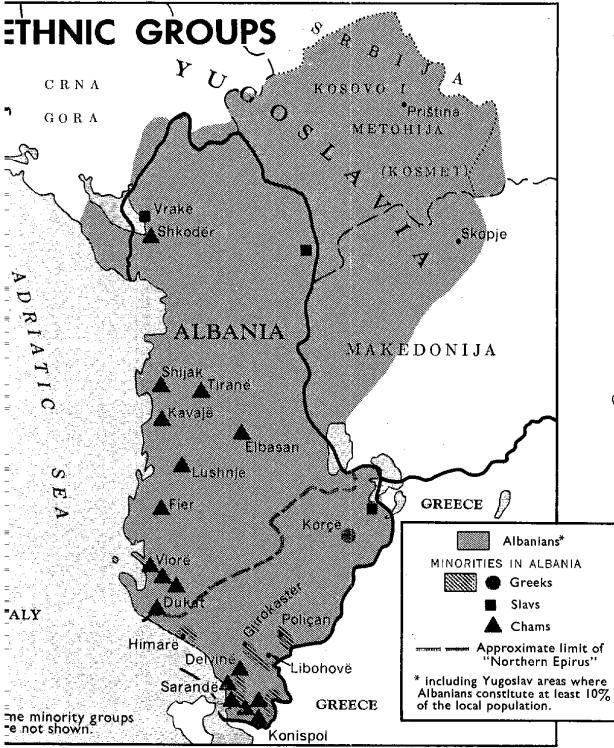
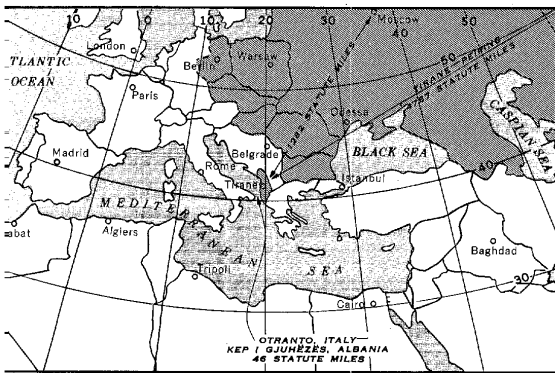
In its thinking and action, any Albanian government is conditioned by factors present in the Balkan environment. Among these are: (1) difficult physical conditions; (2) people jealous of their independence but not yet having attained national unity; and (3) the need for greater exploitation of its resources in order to support a rapidly growing population.

Physical Aspect

Of the 11,100 square-mile area of Albania, roughly one-third is coastal plain, and the remainder is mountainous interior. The coastal plain consists of flat, poorly drained land and low hills. Although it is dotted by swamps, marshes, and shallow lagoons or lakes and is by nature very unhealthy -- a condition that is being corrected by drainage works -- the coastal plain is the most populous part of Albania. Five of the six largest cities and towns are located either on the coastal plain or, as in the case of the capital city of Tiranë, at its inner margin.

In the mountainous two-thirds of the country the ranges have a general north-south alignment interrupted by countertrending spurs, dissected plateaus, and enclosed basins. The mountains vary in elevation from 4,000 feet to over 8,000 feet and are extremely rugged. Their vegetation ranges from forest to scrub or alpine meadow, with considerable areas of bare rock at higher elevations. The streams flowing through the intermontane basins find their way to the coastal plain by way of narrow gorges that, in most cases, cut directly across the trend of the mountains. Movement between basins and between the interior and the coast is difficult, whether it be by way of the narrow, steep-sided gorges or by tortuous roads and trails across the mountains. The principal settled and cultivated areas of the mountain region are within the basins, but the actual valley floors are, in many cases, marshy or subject to inundation. The largest of the intermontane basins and one of the more productive agricultural areas of Albania is the Korçë Basin in the southeast. The alternating basins and gorges characteristic of the interior river valleys have created a number of sites suitable for hydroelectric development. The most important development thus far is the Ulze dam and reservoir on the Mat River.

The terrain of Albania is similar to that across the frontiers in Greece and Yugoslavia, and in several places the boundaries of Albania with those countries follow high mountain barriers. These barriers, however, are flanked by lower mountains, river valleys, or plains that offer fewer obstructions. The frontiers



thus present as many avenues for movement as barriers to it. In the southwest the mountains and valleys of Albania maintain their northwest-southeast orientation for some distance across the Greek boundary, and the upper valleys of the Vjosë and its tributary, the Dhrino, form routeways that converge toward the Greek town of Ioannania. Movement across the central portion of the Greek frontier is obstructed by the Gramos Range, but farther northeastward the interconnecting Korçë and Bilisht Basins open onto the Aliakmon Valley in Greece. Until recent decades, mountainous southern Albania was more accessible to northern Greece than to the ports and capital of Albania. Along the eastern border of Albania the basin of Lake Ohrid and the valley of the north-flowing Drin i Zi (Black Drin) provide routes into Yugoslavia. The Metohija Basin farther north in Yugoslavia is connected with Albania by way of the gorge of the Beli Drim (White Drin) and mountain trails. In the extreme north the lowland around Lake Scutari (Shkodër) provides routeways that bypass the Albanian Alps and lead into Yugoslavia.

The terrain helped to preserve in Albania a way of life that originated in ancient times. The isolation of the interior valleys did much to shape the clannishness and parochial outlook of the Albanians, but on the other hand the mountain barriers did not present insuperable obstacles to peasants in search of fertile land or shepherds looking for better pastures. The mountains could not prevent the complex intermingling of ethnic groups on the fringes of Albanian settlement.

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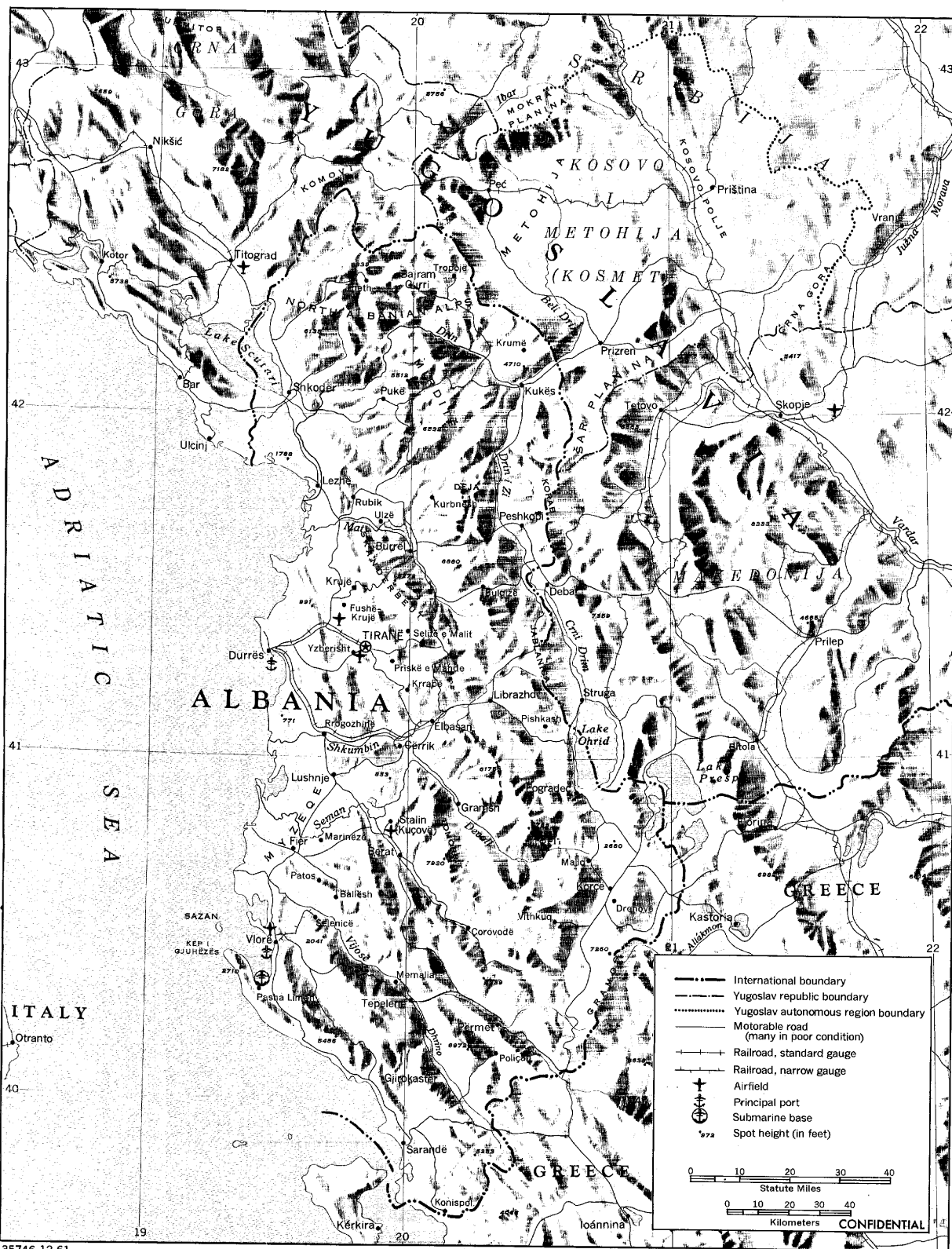
The Communist regime has established or augmented a number of domestic light industries -- textiles, clothing, leather goods, food processing, ceramics, and glassware. The metalworking plants (only one of which is of substantial size) produce mainly simple agricultural equipment and spare parts, or service railroad rolling stock. Although the production of electric power in Albania is lower than in any other country in Europe, it has increased steadily during the past decade, and the country has a large hydroelectric potential.

A major obstacle to the industrialization of Albania is its primitive transportation. The rail system consists of a 124-kilometer standard-gauge railroad connecting Tirane and Elbasan with the port of Durrës and a few short special-purpose narrow-gauge lines. Another standard-gauge line extending north from the existing system is under construction. The remainder of the country is dependent on roads or trails. The principal cities of the coastal plain are connected by fair to poor asphalt-surfaced roads, but most of the roads of the interior are gravel surfaced at best. The oil fields, which are on the coastal plain, have fair road or rail connections, but most of the mineral, coal, and timber areas are in the interior, where equipment must be brought in and products taken out by track over poor mountain roads. The few transborder roads into Yugoslavia and Greece carry very little or no traffic.

The extent of Albanian dependence on the USSR and the European Satellites for its industrial and agricultural development in recent years is reflected in its foreign trade. Imports from the Bloc countries have included industrial machinery, complete industrial plants, motor vehicles, locomotives and railroad rolling stock, coke, farm machinery, fertilizers, and grains. Exports have consisted of crude petroleum, asphalt, ores and metals, wood products, tobacco and cigarettes, processed foods, skins, fruits, and fabrics. In 1959 the USSR and the European Satellites supplied 93 percent of the imports by value and received 94.4 percent of the exports. Apparently economic relations with the European Satellites are continuing in spite of the break with Moscow.

Albania will continue to require outside economic assistance, whether from Communist China, the European Satellites, or elsewhere. It must continue to import bread grains if it is to maintain its economy at even the current low level. Over and above this, long-range plans to modernize the Albanian economy cannot be fulfilled without importing industrial and agricultural equipment. Albania must also have foreign financial backing and technical aid if it is to develop a modern economy.

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valley lands or in towns. The birth rate among the Albanians is higher than the average for Yugoslavia, and the number of peasants per unit of cultivated land in the Kosmet is the highest in the country. Albanians have migrated from the Kosmet to the more prosperous parts of Yugoslavia, where they are looked down upon and unwanted. In Belgrade, for example, they haul coal, handle garbage, and do other menial jobs that no one else wants to do. The Albanian in Yugoslavia is probably better off materially than his counterpart across the border, but in spite of this he tends to have a feeling of nostalgia for his ancestral homeland, a feeling that the Hoxha regime has not been slow to exploit.

The Yugoslav Government has made determined efforts to better the condition of the Albanian minority. The autonomous Kosmet Region was set up in recognition of the status of the Albanians as a nationality. Albanians have the legal rights of citizens, Albanian is recognized as an official language, a few elementary schools with Albanian-speaking teachers have been established, and several magazines and two daily newspapers are published in Albanian. Light industrial plants have been established in the Kosmet, the lignite reserves of the Kosovo Polje are beginning to be exploited, and more land is being put into cultivation. In effect, Yugoslavia is competing with Albania for the allegiance of the minority, and Albanian attempts to stir up discontent in the Kosmet have helped to stimulate Yugoslav programs to improve conditions there.

Resources and Economic Development

Albania, with Soviet and European Satellite assistance, has entered the early stages of industrialization, but it is still essentially an agricultural country even though it does not produce enough food for its rapidly increasing population. About 72 percent of the labor force is engaged in agriculture, yet because of mountainous terrain and poor drainage only about 15 percent of the total land area is classified as arable, and pasture and grassland account for only an additional 27 percent. The best agricultural land is on the coastal plain and in the Korçë Basin, where drainage and irrigation have increased and are continuing to increase the areas available for cultivation. Possibilities for increased crop production in the mountainous two-thirds of Albania, however, are limited. Consequently, Albania faces a real problem in its effort to attain self-sufficiency in food production -- a goal of the Third Five Year Plan (1961-65).

The per capita availability of food, about 2,000 calories per day, is the lowest in Europe, and the country is dependent on grain imports. The most important field crops are corn, wheat, other grains, cotton, tobacco, and sugar beets; and orchards and vineyards are important locally. Sheep, goats, and hogs have increased in numbers since the prewar period. Cotton, tobacco, and sugar beets -- the last mainly in the Korçë Basin -- provide a raw-materials base for the developing light industries of the country, and tobacco and cigarettes are among the more important export items.

The extractive industries of Albania, are, with some exceptions, of minor importance to the Sino-Soviet Bloc, but they are of considerable importance to the country itself, providing items for export and raw materials for domestic industries. Aside from Rumania, Albania is the only European Bloc country that produces a surplus of crude petroleum for export, but petroleum reserves are not thought to be large. Albanian production of chrome and iron-nickel ores contributes significantly to the total Sino-Soviet Bloc supply. The country produces about one-fifth of the Bloc supply of chromium and, within the Bloc, is outranked in production only by the USSR. Chrome-ore concentrates rank in value with tobacco and cigarettes among the most important exports of Albania. The somewhat limited reserves of chrome ore are estimated at between 3 million and 6 million tons. The mining of iron-nickel ore for its nickel content was started about 1958, and production reportedly amounted to 154,000 metric tons for the first half of 1961. A processing plant in Czechoslovakia was scheduled to absorb much of the Albanian output. Albanian reserves of iron-nickel ore are estimated at 20 million tons. Some copper is mined in Albania, and blister copper is produced in small quantities for export. The production of brown coal is almost sufficient for domestic requirements. Albanian sources claim that additional large deposits of copper, iron-nickel, and coal were discovered during 1961. Of the abundant construction materials, only asphalt (both natural and manufactured) is produced in quantities sufficient for export; Albania does not produce enough of the other construction materials to meet its own needs. The forests of the country provide lumber and fuelwood and also support small veneer and furniture industries.

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The Albanian People

In 1960, Albania had a population of 1,625,378, and its rate of population increase -- about 3 percent per year -- is higher than that of any other country in Europe. More than 70 percent of the people are farmers but the beginning of industrialization has been accompanied by an increase in urban population, from 21.3 percent of the total in 1945 to about 31 percent in 1960. The population of Tiranë nearly doubled (from 59,950 in 1945 to about 130,000 in 1960), and new settlements are growing up near mines and powerplants.

About 96 percent of the population belongs to the Albanian ethnic group, the remainder being Greeks, Vlachs (Rumanian-speaking herdsmen), Gypsies, Jews, and Slavs.* Another 800,000 ethnic Albanians live in adjacent parts of Yugoslavia. The Albanians comprise one of the oldest ethnic groups in the Balkan Peninsula, its occupancy of the region possibly antedating Graeco-Roman times. Its present distribution dates from the early Ottoman period when the Albanians, most of whom were converted to Islam, advanced eastward from their base in what is now Albania, displacing the defeated Christian Serbians in the Metohija and Kosovo Basins. On the north the Albanians intermingled with Montenegrins, on the southeast they formed part of the intricate ethnic patchwork of Macedonia, and on the south -- in Epirus -- they were interspersed with Greeks and Vlachs.

Only within the last few decades have the Albanians begun the process of amalgamation into a unified nation. Traditionally, they have been divided along tribal, regional, religious, and class lines. A distinguishing feature of Albanian society as a whole, and one common to all segments of the population, has been the high sense of family loyalty. Albanian society was formerly tribal in structure, the tribe being defined as embracing all the male descendants of a common male ancestor. The tribe and the family commanded the primary loyalty of the individual, overriding loyalty to country or religious belief. The tribes crossed religious and class lines and international boundaries. In the more inaccessible and sparsely populated north, they survived almost until the time of the Communist take-over in 1944. Tribal customs with respect to marriage and property prevailed, blood feuds were not uncommon, and resistance to central authority was a habit. In the center and south, tribal structure had broken down considerably under Ottoman rule, especially in agricultural areas at lower elevations and in towns. Here society had become divided into several classes: landowners, landless tenants, and a few merchants and artisans. Family loyalties and tribal customs, nevertheless, remained.

Regionally, Albanians are divided into the Ghegs of the north (including the Albanians of Yugoslavia) and the Tosks of the south -- the dividing line being roughly along the Shkumbin River. The two groups speak distinctive dialects. The relatively isolated, tribal Ghegs tend to be conservative; the Tosks, having greater contact with the world, are more cosmopolitan and sensitive to outside political currents. Communism found more support among the Tosks than among the Ghegs.

Of the religious groups, Muslims constitute about 70 percent of the population and are found throughout the country. Orthodox Christians make up about 20 percent and, although widely dispersed, are somewhat more heavily concentrated in the south than elsewhere. Roman Catholics, the remaining 10 percent, live exclusively in the north.

Under the impact of the Communist regime, the structure of society has undergone considerable change and a new class of Party workers and functionaries has replaced the old ruling and landowning classes. Collectivization of agriculture, increase in industrial employment, and migration to towns have doubtless contributed to the breakdown of parochialism and the weakening of family cohesiveness. Basic attitudes, nevertheless, seem to change slowly. Family connections still count for much, even among the Communist elite, and occasional reports of disaffection and violence indicate that there still is resistance to central authority.

* Precise data are not available on the ethnic composition of the population and the location of minorities within Albania. The locations shown on the accompanying map are approximate; those of Vlachs, Gypsies, and Jews are not shown, since these groups are not subject to Albanian-Greek or Albanian-Yugoslav rivalry. For Yugoslavia, the information shown on the map and presented in the text is based on the 1953 census.

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Greeks constitute the largest of the minority groups of Albania. They live chiefly in the cities of Korçë and Gjirocastër and in parts of southwestern Albania, but they are not uniformly distributed throughout the portion of Albania designated by the Greeks as "Northern Epirus." The 3,000 square miles that comprise "Northern Epirus" have been claimed by Greece ever since Albania became independent. Greek sources of the mid-1940's estimated that Greeks formed a majority of the population of the area, numbering around 120,000, a figure based on the total number who professed the Orthodox religion, regardless of whether they were Greek or Albanian in national sentiment. At the time of the Balkan Wars (1912-13), when Greek armed forces occupied "Northern Epirus," the majority of the Orthodox Albanians as well as those who considered themselves Greeks, might have preferred to be placed under Greek sovereignty, but with the passage of time the Orthodox Albanians have come to accept Albanian sovereignty. In 1945 Albanian sources placed the number of Greeks at slightly less than 35,000, which seems to have been a reasonable figure if Orthodox Albanians were excluded.

Reports regarding treatment of the Greek minority by the Hoxha government are conflicting. Several of the top leaders of the Albanian Workers (Communist) Party are of ethnic Greek background. Because of the dearth of trained Albanians, professional men from the Greek minority also have occupied positions of importance in the middle ranks of the bureaucracy and at the university and hospital in Tiranë. Reportedly, some of these middle-ranking Greeks were purged in late 1960. It is said that Greeks continue to have their own schools and newspapers and all legal rights of Albanian citizens. Greek defectors have reported that Greeks live under oppressive conditions, but probably the Greek minority suffers no more from the harshness of the regime than does the Albanian majority.

Members of the Muslim Albanian community that formerly lived in northwestern Greece (Greek Epirus) are termed Chams. During and after World War II they were expelled from Greece (or left voluntarily, according to Greek sources) and now live in various parts of Albania. Estimates of their number vary from 12,000 to 25,000. They have not been assimilated into the native population, and most of them would probably prefer to return to Greece. Many other people from northern Greece also moved into Albania during the Greek civil war (1946-49). All but some 500 refugees, however, have been repatriated.

The small Slavic minority in Albania includes a Montenegrin settlement on the shore of Lake Scutari, scattered Serbian settlements along the eastern boundary, and a settlement near Lake Prespa, which is variously said to be Bulgarian or Macedonian.* Information about these groups is meager. Yugoslav officials claim that the Albanian Government is, in effect, trying to denationalize these groups by failing to provide schools using their own languages. In 1961, Slavic-speaking inhabitants of the northern border regions of Albania reportedly were being moved to Fier, in the middle coastal region. Such measures may well have been taken in connection with a general tightening of border security.

When the boundaries of Albania were delimited in the period 1913-26, sizable numbers of Albanians to the east and north were left outside the new country. They are concentrated in the Yugoslav Autonomous Region of Kosovo i Metohija (the Kosmet), where they comprise 65 percent of the total population and more than half of the population in 16 of the 18 former districts of the region. Albanians and Serbians have disputed the occupancy of the Kosmet since the Middle Ages. During the period of the Balkan Wars and during World War II, Serbians slaughtered Albanians and vice versa, depending upon which group had the upper hand. Albanians form about 13 percent of the population in the Yugoslav People's Republic of Makedonija and are concentrated most heavily in the upper Vardar Valley. In the People's Republic of Crna Gora (Montenegro), they make up about 6 percent of the population and are concentrated near the Albanian border to the southwest and the northeast of Lake Scutari.

Within Yugoslavia the Albanians are one of the most underprivileged of the many nationality groups, and the regions in which they live are among the most underdeveloped in the country. The per capita income in the Kosmet in 1957 was less than half the national average. In parts of the Kosmet the Albanians inhabit the mountains, whereas the comparatively prosperous Serbs live on the more fertile

* In official Yugoslav terminology the Macedonian Slavs are treated as a distinct "Macedonian" nationality. Bulgaria considers them to be a subdivision of the Bulgarian nationality.